

ACCOUNTING POLICY

TOPIC: Section 10--Special Expense 8.0	EFFECTIVE DATE: 7/26/93
TITLE: Cellular Telephone Policy - Acquisition and Reimbursement	REVISION DATE: 2/18/00
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**BACKGROUND**

The following are policy and procedures on the acquisition and use of cellular phones. The purpose of this policy is not to restrict legitimate uses of this technology, but rather to ensure that it is used appropriately.

**POLICY**

The Department restricts use of cellular phone service to those business situations that can be justified as the most cost-effective alternative, and which fit at least one of the following criteria:

- Job responsibilities and travel status require regular communication;
- Security risk is substantially reduced for field assignments in high-risk settings or high-risk transportation of clients;
- Emergency response activities;
- Accommodation for personnel with physical impairments which severely limit their use of non-accessible public telephones.

**PROCEDURE FOR STATE PURCHASED CELLULAR TELEPHONES**

Requests for cellular phone service require Division Administrator approval prior to submittal to the Division of Management and Technology Telecommunications Office for review and assistance. Requests will then be returned to the requesting Division for processing. The Telecommunications Office will provide assistance and information with the procurement process.

Alternatives, which should be considered prior to submitting a cellular telephone request, are:

- a. Radio pagers.
- b. Credit cards to be used from public telephones.
- c. A combination of these two options.

The requesting Division can submit requests for cellular service on an e-mail or memo, to the DMT Telecommunications Office. The request must include the following:

- Listing of the position name(s) for which a cellular telephone is being requested, including the organization and location;
- Description of the circumstances which justify use of a cellular telephone;
- Indication of the appropriate justification criteria being used

#### **REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE-PURCHASED CELLULAR TELEPHONES**

1. Cellular telephones must be kept under appropriate management control and limited to only the highest priority needs.
2. Cellular telephones should be shared or pooled whenever possible to minimize the number of personally assigned units.
3. Cellular telephones are approved based on job responsibilities and are assigned to the position, not the individual, and should remain with the position if turnover occurs.
4. Personally assigned cellular telephones must be recorded on the state-owned property listing form, and returned to the supervisor upon termination.
5. Divisions should purchase cellular telephones that are portable and allow hands-free use in vehicles. The DHFS Telecommunications Office can assist with equipment and service agreement acquisition.
6. Use of cellular telephones is restricted to Department business. In order to minimize connect charges, business usage should be limited to only those occasions when using pay phones or office-phones is not more cost-effective. Personal calls are generally prohibited. (Check for individual division policies for exceptions). Divisions are responsible for monitoring cellular telephone use of employees. Upon request, monthly cost reports should be shared with the Office of Telecommunications.
7. Divisions are responsible for entering all pertinent information on each cellular telephone purchased into their property management system.
8. Divisions are responsible for maintaining a current inventory of cellular phones with the following information:
  - Employee name(s) and mailing address;
  - New cellular #(s);
  - Vendor name;
  - Type of cellular phone.
  - Account/Billing Information

#### **PROCEDURE FOR EMPLOYEE-OWNED CELLULAR TELEPHONES**

Divisions may allow employees to use their personally owned cellular telephones in state-owned vehicles. Only portable cellular telephones can be used for this purpose. Employee cellular telephones may not be attached to or installed

in any state-owned vehicle.

Divisions may also allow employees to use their personally owned cellular telephones in their personal vehicle for state business calls.

The Division Administrator may determine the limitations and approval process. This process should take into consideration the higher costs associated with this.

Neither the Department nor the State of Wisconsin assumes any liability for personally owned cellular telephones if they are lost, stolen, or damaged in any way.

Employees may be reimbursed for state business calls on their own cellular telephones; however, cellular access charges are entirely the responsibility of the employee.

In order to be reimbursed, the following conditions must be met:

1. Reimbursement requests should be made on a travel voucher.
2. A copy of the detailed phone bill must be attached to the reimbursement request. If the cellular provider doesn't provide a detailed billing, the employee must request that they do so in order to be reimbursed. If the copy of the bill doesn't list whom the calls were made to, the employee will need to provide that information. This information should include the phone number called and the person and/or the agency called. Employees must be prepared to justify unusual telephone charges when requested.

#### **CONTACT PERSONS**

Any questions about the procedure for requesting approval to purchase cellular telephones should be directed to Claudette Higgins, DHFS Office of Telecommunications, (608) 267-7299.

Any questions concerning reimbursement for state business calls on a personally owned cellular phone should be directed to Harlan Olson, BFS - Accounts Payable/Preaudit Section, (608) 267-9301.